**Genesis 10 - Nations Descended from Noah**

(1 Chron 1:5-27)

1 Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

3 The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

6 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

7 The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord."

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah,

12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).

13 Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim,

14 Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

15 Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth;

16 the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite;

17 the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite;

18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

20 These were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations.

21 And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder.

22 The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

23 The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

24 Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber.

25 To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

26 Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

30 And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east.

31 These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.

32 These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

**THE SUCCESSION FROM THE SONS OF NOAH (10:1-11:9)**

**THE TABLE OF NATIONS (CHAP. 10)**

**10:1**

This table of nations gives a survey of the descendants of Noah's three sons.

God had told them to "fill the earth" (9:1).

But later their descendants' moving out and filling the earth (11:1-9) was divine Judgment on a rebellious people.

This table appears to represent the known tribes of the earth.

Seventy descendants of Noah's sons are listed, including 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem.

And these are cleverly arranged into patterns. **(See the Diagram.)**

The basic framework of the table is the benê ("the sons of") motif (the Heb. benê occurs 12 times, in vv. 2-4, 6-7,20-23,29,31-32).

Other times, however, the chapter uses yalad ("he begot"), which seems to suggest that these were interpretations given to the benê table.

These yalad sections (beginning in vv. 8,13,15,21,25-26), in line with the idea of the Tôledôt, trace the significant developments of personages within the structure of the table.

(The NIV renders the yalad verb "was the father of" in vv. 8,13,15,26, "was the ancestor of" in v. 21, and "were born to" in v. 25.)

Of special note are verses 15-19, in which Canaan's descendants are traced (vv. 15-18) and even the boundaries of the Promised Land are given (v. 19).

The writer was apparently using an ancient table to clarify which of Noah's descendants would experience blessing and which ones would experience cursing.

Most of the yalad ("he begot") sections pertain to the Canaanites or the Hamites, the tribes close to Israel.

To see which neighbors would face blessing and which ones cursing, Israel need only consult this table.

The table of nations is a "horizontal" genealogy rather than a "vertical" one (those in chaps. 5 and Gen 11 are vertical).

Its purpose is not primarily to trace ancestry; instead it shows political, geographical, and ethnic affiliations among tribes for various reasons, most notable being holy war.

Tribes shown to be "kin" would be in league together.

Thus this table aligns the predominant tribes in and around the land promised to Israel.

These names include founders of tribes, clans, cities, and territories.

The table shows which peoples in the ancient world shared in the blessing and cursing motif.

The table also stresses how they spread out and replenished the earth, though not in obedience.

They all came from one, Noah, and were therefore one people; but some were closely related and others were distant.

The table also shows the plight of the human race, scattered across the face of the earth and living according to their own cultural and linguistic affiliations.

Wars and conflicts inevitably result from this arrangement.

**10:2-5**

The descendants of Japheth, numbering 14, were given first.

These were northern people, remote from Israel.

Gomer represented the Cimmerians, thought to be of the same stock as the Scythians.

Magog was the land of Gog, between Armenia and Cappadocia (Ezek 38:2; 39:6; see the map "The World of Jeremiah and Ezekiel" in Introduction to Jer.).

The name represented Scythian hordes southwest of the Black Sea.

Madai represented the Medes east of Assyria and southwest of the Caspian Sea.

Javan was the general word for the Hellenic race, the Ionians of western Asia Minor.

Tubal and Meshech were northern military states.

They might have been located in Pontus and the Armenian mountains.

Tiras may refer to the seafaring Pelasgians of the Aegean coasts.

From these seven, seven more were derived.

Three northern tribes came from Gomer: Ashkenaz (related to the Scythians), Riphath, and Togarmah (distant northern tribes).

The sons of Javan, two geographical names and two tribal names, were all kin to the Greeks.

Elishah was Alashiyah or Cyprus.

Tarshish was a distant coast in Asia Minor.

The Kittim also dwelt on Cyprus.

The "Dodanim" (NIV marg.) may have lived in Dodona, Greece (unless "Dodanim" is a textual variant for Rodanim [Rhodes]; cf. 1 Chron 1:7).

These northern tribes did not figure predominantly in Israel's history, but occur frequently in prophetic writings (Ezek 27; 37:1-39:29).

**10:6-7**

The descendants of Ham (vv. 6-20) formed the eastern and southern peoples of Mesopotamia.

The Cushites (descendants of Cush) settled in south Arabia, and in present-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia.

They became mingled with Semitic tribes dwelling in the same region; hence there is repetition of some of the names in other lines.

Seba was in Upper Egypt. Havilah ("sand-land") could refer to northern and eastern Arabia on the Persian Gulf or the Ethiopian coast.

Sabtah, ancient Hadhramaut, was on the western shore of the Persian Gulf.

Raamah and Sabtecah were in southern Arabia.

Sheba was in southwest Arabia (cf. the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings 10:1-13), and Dedan was in northern Arabia. Some of the people in these ancient kingdoms traced their lineage to Joktan from Shem (Gen 10:29).

So there was a mixing in the settlement.

**10:8-12**

Inserted in this table of nations is the story of Nimrod.

This is the first "begot" (NIV, was the father of) section (cf. comments on v. 1) and forms a major stylistic break from the tribal names preceding it.

Attempts to identify or date Nimrod have proven unsuccessful.

Because his name seems to be connected with the verb "to rebel" (marad), tradition has identified him with tyrannical power.

He was the founder of the earliest imperial world powers in Babylon and Assyria.

The table simply presents him as a mighty hunter, a trait found commonly in Assyrian kings.

He was founder of several powerful cities.

The centers he established became major enemies of Israel.

**10:13-14**

Another "son" of Ham was Mizraim, or Egypt. Mizraim developed into (yalad) tribes that ranged from North Africa to Crete.

The placing of the Philistines in this connection represents migration, not lineage (similar to Israel being "from" Egypt).

The Philistines migrated from their Aegean homelands through Caphtor into the Delta of Egypt and finally to Palestine.

This, however, appears to refer to an earlier group of Pelasgo-Philistine tribes, distinct from those in the 13 th century B.C.

**10:15-20**

The final Hamite line that was significant for Israel was the Canaanite group.

Once again the listing employs "begot" (yalad) to list the cities and tribes of peoples living in the Promised Land. Sidon was the predominant Phoenician city.

Hittites (het, "Heth") is problematic, but may refer to a pocket of Hittites from the early movements of tribes.

The Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem.

Amorites was a general reference to western Semites, but here points to a smaller ethnic group in the mixed population of Canaan.

The other seven Canaanite tribal names are less problematic; they were tribes that settled in Lebanon, Hamath on the Orontes River, and all through the land.

Their listing is significant after the passage pronouncing the curse on Canaan (9:25-27).

**10:21-31**

The descendants from Shem are recorded last. Elamites, descendants of Shem's first son Elam, dwelt in the highlands east of Babylonia.

Asshur was the name of the region and people of Assyria, where Nimrod, a Hamite, had founded several cities (v. 11).

Arphaxad resided northeast of Nineveh.

Lud was the Ludbu of the Assyrians.

Perhaps Lud was a shortened form of Ludda, possibly another name for Lydia (in what is now western Turkey).

Aram was an ancestor of the Aramean tribes in the steppes of Mesopotamia.

His descendants (v. 23) are not well known.

The line then traces Arphaxad to Eber and his sons, using "begot" (NIV, was the father of) to introduce this embellishment.

The note on Eber's son Peleg - that in his time the earth was divided - seems to pinpoint the Babel experience (11:1-9).

The verb pelag is used in the Old Testament to describe division into languages.

So the Babel event occurred five generations after the Flood.

The table then turns to trace the tribes from Peleg's brother... Joktan (10:26-29), most of whom lived in the Arabian peninsula.

Israel would find ancient blood ties with these 13 tribes of Joktanites in the desert.

**10:32**

Here is a colophon-type ending, reminding the readers that all families came from Noah, but some were of special interest for the nation Israel.